Islamic Academy of Coventry

Sīrah of Muḥammad ﷺ

Part 3 – Life before Prophethood

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Sīrah of Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Part 3 – Life before Prophethood

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بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

Introduction

I begin in the name of Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ Lord of the Worlds, and sending Peace & Salutations on our beloved Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ.

In the previous 2 booklets, I had discussed the blessed lineage of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ. The tribe of Quraysh were from the descendants of ʿIsmāʿīl عَلَيۡهِٱلسَّلَامُ who was the elder son of Ibrāhīm عَلَيۡهِٱلسَّلَامُ. The Quraysh ruled over Makkah and were responsible for the pilgrims who used to come and visit the House of Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ.

ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib, the paternal Grandfather of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ had been born in Yathrib and brought to Makkah by his uncle Muṭṭalib after his father Hāshim had passed away. He assumed his place as the leader of the Quraysh and Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ showed him many signs.

Among these signs was the finding of the well of Zamzam which had been lost since the tribe of Jurhūm had left Makkah many years ago. ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib was shown the location of the well through a dream and together with his eldest son Ḥārith, rediscovered the well.

The Quraysh had wanted a share in the well and in order to settle the matter, they all agreed to visit a Soothsayer in Shām. Along the way, ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib and his family ran out of water and the other tribes refused to help them. Once again Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ favoured ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib and blessed them with water coming from the place where his camels hoof had touched the ground. The other tribes saw this blessing and asked ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib for forgiveness. They all returned to Makkah and now there was no longer any dispute over the well.

ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib had also made an oath to Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ that he would sacrifice one son if he had 10 sons that grew up to maturity. Once again he saw a dream in which he was reminded of the oath and the lots were cast to see which son would be the chosen one. The lot fell upon ʿAbdullāh, the most beloved of his sons. After an outcry, it was decided that the lots would be recast with ʿAbdullāh on one side and 10 camels on the other. Each time ʿAbdullāh's name is drawn, 10 camels would be sacrificed. Eventually 100 camels were sacrificed in his place.

After this incident, ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib got busy in finding a wife for ʿAbdullāh. Āminah was chosen from the tribe of Banū Zuḥra. She was the daughter of Wahb ibn ʿAbd Manāf & Barrah bint ʿAbdul ʿUzza.

Āminah and ʿAbdullāh got married and she was pregnant with child when ʿAbdullah went on a trade journey and fell ill. He stayed in Yathrib and the trade caravan returned to Makkah. ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib enquired about his son's absence and sent his eldest son Ḥārith to find out what had happened. Upon reaching Madīnah, Ḥārith found out that his younger brother had passed away.

In this booklet we shall see what Rasūlullāh ﷺ life was like before he was given the light of Prophethood. All the way from his birth, through his childhood, marriage, and fatherhood.

Muḥammad ﷺ

↓

ʿAbdullāh

↓

ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib

↓

Hāshim

↓

Abd Manāf

↓

Qusayy

The Birth of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

50 or 55 days after the incident with the people of the elephant, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was born in the house of his uncle Abū Ṭālib.

It was the year of the elephant corresponding to 571 CE, in the month Rabīʿ Al-Awwal and on a Monday morning. Contrary to popular belief, there is no unanimous or fixed position regarding the precise date of his birth[1]. The preferred view is that it was the 8th or the 9th. He was born on a Monday during Ṣubah Ṣādiq, which is true dawn.



When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was born, Āminah called for his grandfather ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib so he could come and see his grandson. He came, took his grandson in his arms and took him inside the Holy Kaʿbah where he prayed and gave thanks to Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ He then took his grandson to his house so he can show his family the newest member.



[1] http://islamicportal.co.uk/dates-of-the-blessed-birth-and-demise-of-prophet-muhammad-english/

ʿAbdul Muṭṭalibs' 3 year old son ʿAbbās رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ met him at the door. He held out the baby and said to his son ʿAbbās رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ, this is your brother, kiss him, and ʿAbbās رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ kissed him.

The Miraculous Events

There were many miraculous events which took place during the birth of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Fāṭimah bint ʿAbdullāh, mentions that she was with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ mother during his birth. At that time, she saw that the whole room was filled with light and she saw that the stars in the sky bowed down, until she thought that the stars would fall on her.



In the Musnad of Aḥmad and Mustadrak Ḥākim, there is a narration which mentions that, Irbād ibn Sāriya says that the mother of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, during childbirth, saw a light which shone on the castles in Syria. In another narration it mentions the castles of Busra which is a city in Syria.

The Seventh Day

On the 7th day, ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib performed the Aqīqah of his grandson and invited all of the Quraysh.

He then named his grandson Muḥammad. The Quraysh asked him, oh Abul Ḥārith (that was his teknonym) 'Why have you given him a name which none of your forefathers have ever given to anyone before?' ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib said 'I have named him this because Allāh in the Heavens and Allāh's creation on the earth can praise this child'.

Meaning of the Word Muhammad

The root word for Muḥammad is Ḥamd which means praise. And the meaning of Muḥammad is that person who is praised. Again the perfect name for the person who is the most praised person to have ever set foot on the earth.



The other names of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

There is a Ḥadīth in both Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhāri and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim narrated by Jubayr ibn Mutʿam رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرِ بْنِ مُطْعِمٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ رضى الله عنه قَالَ
قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم
" لِي خَمْسَةُ أَسْمَاءٍ أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَحْمَدُ وَأَنَا الْمَاحِي الَّذِي يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِي
الْكُفْرَ وَأَنَا الْحَاشِرُ الَّذِي يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ عَلَى قَدَمِي وَأَنَا الْعَاقِبُ "[2]

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said "I have 5 names. I am Muḥammad, I am Aḥmad, I am Māḥī meaning the one who will remove disbelief, I am Ḥāshir meaning the people will gather around his feet, (meaning I will be the first to rise from my grave or on that day Rasūlullāh ﷺ will be the Imām and representative of everyone, and everyone will be needy of him) and I am Āqib (meaning the one who comes after all of the Prophets)".

Imām Mālik mentions that Āqib means the one upon whom Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ stops the legacy of Prophethood.

[2] Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhāri 3532

The Kunyah (teknonym) of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ

In Arab culture, many people have teknonyms or a Kunyah. This is the practise where a parent is referred to by the names of their children. Sometimes they can also be referred to an attribute which they have. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ Kunyah was Abul Qāsim after his eldest son. He was also called Abū Ibrāhīm (Anas رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنۡهُ mentions, when Māriyah Qibṭiyah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنۡهَا gave birth to Ibrāhīm, Jibrīl عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ came and said Assalāmu ʿAlayka Yā Abā Ibrāhīm)

أبو القاسم

The Early Days

After the birth of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, his mother Āminah suckled him for 3 or 4 days. Then Thuwaybah, who was the slave girl of Abū Lahab, gave him milk. Abū Lahab was one of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ paternal uncles.

Thuwaybah had gone to her master Abū Lahab to inform him of the good news that his nephew had been born. Upon hearing the good news, he was so happy that he freed her.

Thuwaybah also suckled Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ, therefore both him and Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, are milk brothers, paternally uncle and nephew and cousins from their mothers side.



Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا

In Arabian culture, young children born in the noble households would be sent to the desert to spend the early part of their lives. This would be so they can be brought up in a clean environment, whilst learning pure Arabic.



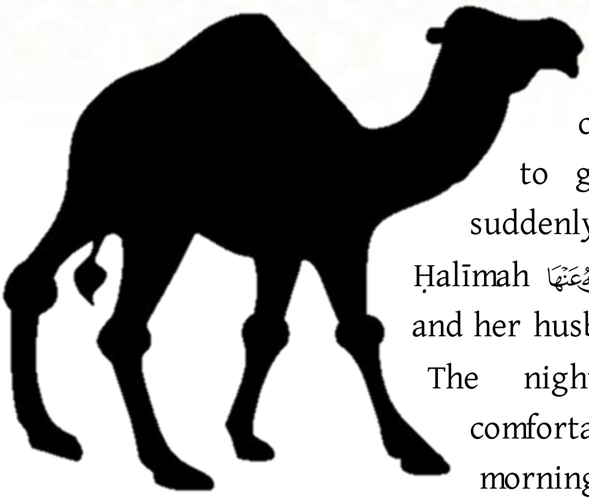
The women of the Banū Saʿad ibn Bakr tribe used to come to Makkah each year to look for unweaned children, children who were still being suckled. Their territory lied to the south east of Makkah. Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا came to Makkah with the women from her tribe. Her husband whose name was Ḥārith accompanied her as well as one of her children who was also unweaned. She had brought with her a skinny donkey and a she camel which never used to give a drop of milk. Due to hunger they were not even able to sleep at night.

A Wet Nurse is found

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was presented to all of the women from Banū Saʿad, but as soon as they found out he was an orphan they would refuse to take him. If a child does not have a father then how will they be rewarded for looking after him?

All of the women managed to find a child except Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا. When the time came for the women to return, she found it difficult that she should return home empty handed. All of a sudden she found an urge to take this orphan child, Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. She went to her husband and said that she would definitely go to the child and bring him. Ḥārith said if you do that there is no problem. I hope that Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ makes him a reason of good and blessing for us.

So with this hope, Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا took the child and because of this, Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ opened the doors of blessings for her and her family. Previously, she had no milk to feed her other child but as soon as she took in Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, she had enough milk not only to feed him but also the other child as well.



When they went to milk the camel which never used to give a drop of milk, suddenly its udders were full. Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا said that both she and her husband drank to their fill. The night passed by very comfortably for them and in the morning her husband Ḥārith

said to her, 'Oh Ḥalīmah, understand this well, by Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ you have taken a very blessed child'.

The time now came for them to leave Makkah, so they all got mounted their rides and started to go, and so did Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهَا with this new child. The skinny donkey which previously had to be forced to move, was now moving swiftly. The other women enquired to Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهَا, 'Is this the same donkey you came on?'

The Banū Saʿad

Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهَا arrived home at the Banu Saʿad with her family and Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ. At that time, there was no other place where there was more drought, than their land.

When Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهَا goats would go to graze, they would come back in the evening with their udders full, whilst others people's goats would not even have a drop of milk. The other people said to their shepherds that we want you to take our animals to the same place where Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهَا animals graze and so they did, but their animals would still return hungry and without milk whilst Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهَا goats were full of milk.



Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا and her family continued to witness many blessings from Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ while Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was in their care.

The Splitting of the Chest

When Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was 2 years old, Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا weaned him so he no longer needed her milk. She brought him back to Makkah to give him back to his mother. At that time there was a plague in Makkah and also due to the blessings this child had brought with him, she requested if she could keep him a while longer. Her request was accepted and she brought him back to the Banū Saʿad.

One day, Muḥammad صَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ went with this foster brothers to take the animals to graze. Suddenly his foster brother came running back to Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا and said that two people dressed in white came and laid our Qurayshi brother (Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) on the floor.

As soon as they heard this, Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا and her husband Ḥārith ran looking for Muḥammad صَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. They found him standing in a place and his face was very pale. They both took the child to their chest and asked him what had happened. He said two men clothed in white came to me and laid me down. They opened my chest and searched it for I know not what. Ḥalīmah

رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهَا and her husband looked around but could see no sign of these men. There was no sign of blood or even any scars on the blessed body of this child. But the children would not take back their words.



Who were these two men? The blessed Angels of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ Jibrīl عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ and Mikāīl عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ had come that day dressed in white with a gold basin full of snow. They split open the chest of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and took out his heart. His heart was then opened and they took out one or two clots of blood which was the portion of Shayṭān. They then placed the heart in the gold basin and washed it with the snow. The heart was put back in its place and they placed a seal in between the sides of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ.

How many times was the Chest Split?

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ had his chest split open 4 times in his life as below:

1. When he was living with the Banū Saʿad when he was 4 years old
2. When Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ was 10 years' old
3. When he became a Prophet
4. On the night of Meʿrāj (ascension to the Heavens)

Why Wash with Snow?

Now the Question might be asked, why was Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ heart washed with snow?

In Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhāri, there is a Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ, that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to a make the following supplication:

أَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَاىَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ

اللَّهُمَّ نَقِّنِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنَقَّى الثَّوْبُ الأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ

اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْ خَطَايَاىَ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ [3]

"Oh Allāh set apart between me and my sins as the East and the West are set apart from each other and clean me from my sins like how a white garment is cleaned from dirt, Oh Allāh wash off my sins with water, snow and hail"

In this supplication, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked for many things. Amongst them was for Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ to wash away his sins. Generally only unclean things are washed, clean things are not washed. Secondly, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ requested water from hail and snow be used to wash away the sins because the effect of sins is heat. If sins had no heat then he would not have asked for snow or hail water to be used.

[3] Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhāri 744

So from this we can determine that sins are not only unclean but also cause heat. Therefore as well as removing the uncleanliness we also have to remove this heat which is caused by the sins. By using warm water, the sins would be cleaned but the heat would remain.

Return to Makkah

After the incident with the splitting of the chest, Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا got worried that something might happen to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. She took him back to his mother Āminah and told her what had happened. When Āminah heard, she didn't get worried at all. Āminah mentioned the things that used to happen to her when she was pregnant with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and at the time of his birth. She said the status of my child will be very high.

Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا then returned home to the Banū Saʿad and left Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ with his mother.

The Passing of Āminah

The first few years of Rasūlullāh ﷺ life had been spent with the Banū Saʿad and now he was back with his family in Makkah.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ reached 6 years of age, his mother Āminah decided to go to Madīnah, which was still known as Yathrib at the time. Umm Ayman accompanied them. Āminah stayed for one month with her family and then she left to go back to Makkah.

On the way home, she fell ill. They reached a place called Abwa, and there the mother of Rasūlullāh ﷺ passed away. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was brought back to Makkah with Umm Ayman and given to his grandfather ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib. Rasūlullāh ﷺ father ʿAbdullāh had passed away even before he was born and now he had also lost his mother.

The Maternal Grandparents of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

وهب بن عبد مناف
(Wahb ibn ʿAbd Manāf)

برة بنت عبد العزى
(Barrah bint ʿAbdul ʿUzza)

آمنة
(Āminah)

Guardianship of ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ was now looked after by his grandfather ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib. ʿAbdul Muṭṭalibs' real name was Shaybah, the son of Hāshim and Salmah. He had come to Makkah with his uncle Muṭṭalib.

ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib kept his grandson Muḥammad صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ with him at all times. Whenever ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib used to go to the Kaʿbah, a special couch was put in its shade and no one had the audacity to even place a foot on it. His own children would sit around it or on its edge, but when Muḥammad صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ used to come, he used to sit on it without any worries. His uncles used to try and move him, but ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib used to say to them, leave him there. He then used to call Muḥammad near him and sit him down and get pleased in watching what he was doing.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ stayed under the guardianship of his grandfather for 2 years, until he was 8 years old. ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib now passed away.

Before he passed away he handed over guardianship of the child to Abu Ṭālib, as he was the Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ real uncle.

ʿAbdullāh & Abu Ṭālib both shared the same mother and father.

ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib advised Abu Ṭālib to bring up the child with love and affection.

Umm Ayman mentions that when ʿAbdul Muṭṭalibs Janāzah (funeral) was being taken, she saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ following it while crying. He was only at the tender age of 8 and had now lost both of his parents and Grandfather. His maternal Grandfather 'Wahb' had also passed away before his parents' marriage.



Guardianship of ʿAbū Ṭālib

After the death of his grandfather, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was looked after by Abu Ṭālib and his wife Fāṭimah. Abu Ṭālib looked after his nephew even more than his own children. He fulfilled the rights of guardianship dutifully. Abu Ṭālibs' love for his nephew Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was immense, but he never embraced Islām.

The First Journey to Shām

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ reached 12 years of age and Abu Ṭālib decided to go to Shām (Syria) with a trade caravan. He had no intention of taking his nephew with him but at the time of departure, upon seeing how upset his nephew was, he decided to take him along.



They made their way to Busra which is a town in Shām. A Christian monk used to live there whose name was Georges but was known as Baḥīrā'.

Baḥīrā' was familiar with the signs of the final Prophet which had been mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. When the caravan from Makkah came, upon seeing the face of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he realized that this is none other than this last Prophet. Normally he would not even go to see the caravans that had arrived, but this time, he looked at each and every one of them until he took the hand of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

The leaders of the Quraysh said to Baḥīrā', 'how do you know this?' Baḥīrā' said, 'when you came, there was no tree or stone which did not bow down, and trees and stones only bow down to Prophets'. He also said he recognised the seal of the Prophet ﷺ.

Baḥīrā' prepared food for the whole caravan and everyone came to eat but Rasūlullāh ﷺ was not there. He asked, where has he gone? They said he has gone to take the camels to graze. They then sent someone to go and call him.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ arrived, there was a cloud over him giving him shade. All of the people had sat under the shade of the tree and there was no shaded area left so Rasūlullāh ﷺ

went and sat on the side of the tree. As soon as he sat, the shade of the tree moved towards him. Baḥīrā' said, look at the shadow, how it went towards Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ. He asked who the guardian of this child was. Everyone pointed to Abu Ṭālib. Baḥīrā' then told Abu Ṭālib to send Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ back to Makkah for his protection, and he did.



Al Amīn

Rasūlullāh ﷺ grew up and in his people he had the best of character. He looked after the needs of others, he was kind and forbearing. He was the most truthful and trustworthy. Out of all the people, he would stay away from arguing, lewdness and bad talk more than anyone else. This is why the people called him Al-Amīn.

ʿAbdullāh ibn Abil Hamsa mentions that before Rasūlullāh ﷺ had been granted Prophethood, he had made a transaction with him. He still had to give something to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, so he said to him that he would go and get it now.

When he got home, he forgot his promise. 3 days later he remembered that he had promised to come back and give Rasūlullāh ﷺwhat was due. As soon as he remembered, he went back to the place where he had promised him and found that Rasūlullāh ﷺ was waiting there.

The only thing Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to him was that he had caused him some bother. He had been waiting at that place for 3 days! Subhānallāh, look at the patience of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. And this was even before he became a Prophet.

Sayyidah Khadījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا

Sayyidah Khadījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا was a very wealthy woman from a noble family in Makkah. In the times of ignorance as well as when Islām came about, she was known as Ṭāhirah due to her pure qualities. When the Quraysh used to send the trade caravans, she used to send her own goods as well.

When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was 25 years old, Sayyidah Khadījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا sent him a proposal for him to take her goods and sell them on her behalf. His reputation of being a trustworthy person preceded him.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ accepted the proposal and with her slave Maysarah they set off for Shām. They reached Busra, and stopped to take some shade under a tree.

A monk called Nastūr used to live there. He saw Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and came towards him. He looked at the blessed Messenger and said, after ʿĪsā ibn Maryam عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ, up until now, apart from you no Prophet has come.

After this Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ got busy with trading. Upon their return, Maysarah informed Khadījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا about their travels and all the miraculous incidents that took place.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave Khaḍījah رضي الله عنها the income from the trade caravan and she made more profit than ever before. She had agreed to give Rasūlullāh ﷺ a certain share but due to the profits, she gave him even more.



The Marriage Proposal

Ibn Isḥāq mentions, that after Khaḍījah رضي الله عنها listened to the incidents which took place on the trade journey, like what Nastūr the monk had said, and Maysarah's account, she went to her cousin Waraqah ibn Naufal and told him about them. Waraqah told her that if what you say is true, then Muḥammad ﷺ is the Messenger of these people and I know for sure that a Prophet is going to come who we are waiting for and his time is near.

2 months and 25 days after they returned from Shām, Khaḍījah رضي الله عنها sent a marriage proposal herself to Muḥammad ﷺ.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ consulted with his uncle Abu Ṭālib and accepted the proposal.

The Nikāḥ of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ & Khaḍījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهَا

On the appointed day, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ went with his uncles Abu Ṭālib and Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ and some more people from his family to the house of Khaḍījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهَا. Her father Khuwaylid had passed away, so her uncle ʿAmr ibn Asad was present. The marriage took place in her house.

At the time of their marriage, Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was 25 and Khaḍījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهَا was 40. The dowry was set at 20 camels.
This was Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ first Nikāḥ, marriage and Khaḍījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهَا 3rd. They remained together for 25 years and Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ blessed them with many children. During Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ marriage to her, he had no other wives.



The Rebuilding of the Kaʿbah

Since the beginning of time, up until now, the Kaʿbah has been built 5 times.

First it was built by ʿĀdam عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ who was commanded by Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ. ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿUmar Ibn Al-Ās رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهُ narrates that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ sent Jibrīl عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ to ʿĀdam عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ with the command to build the Kaʿbah. When ʿĀdam عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ completed the building of the Kaʿbah, he was ordered to circumambulate it, meaning go around it (perform the Ṭawāf). He was told that you are the first man and this is the first house which has been built for peoples worship.

When the floods came in the time of Nuh عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ, there were no remains left of the Kaʿbah. Ibrāhīm عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ was then given the command to build the Kaʿbah for a second time. There were no signs left of the foundation so Jibrīl عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ came and showed him where the original foundations were. Along with Ismāʿīl عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ, he rebuilt the Kaʿbah.

The 3rd time was 5 years before Prophethood when Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ was 35 years old.

The Kaʿbah was in a state of disrepair, when it rained, the water would seep inside.

The leaders of the Quraysh all got together and decided that they would take down the existing Kaʿbah and rebuild it completely. When this had been decided, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ father's uncle, Abū Wahb got up and said that all the money which is to be spent on rebuilding the Kaʿbah should only come from Ḥalāl, permissible earnings.

The Responsibilities are divided

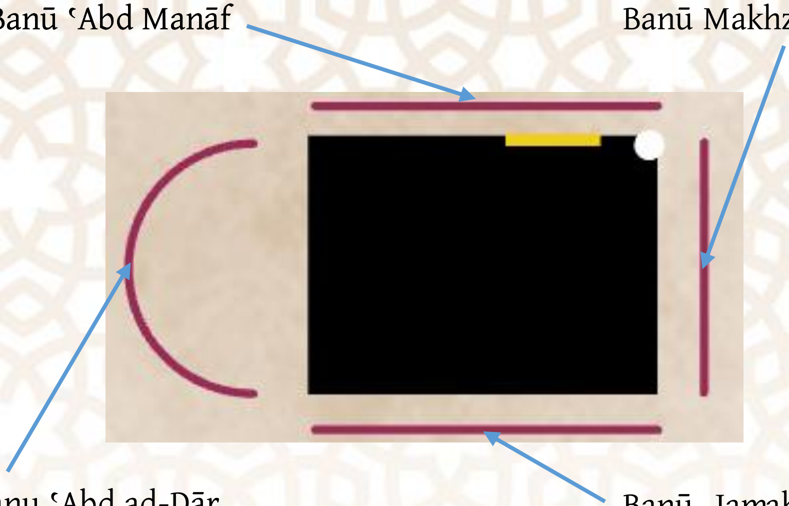
The honour of rebuilding the Kaʿbah was so great that each clan was given a certain part to build to ensure that no one was left out from this honour.

The side of the Kaʿbah by the door was given to the Banū ʿAbd Manāf (which was the family of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and Banū Zuhrah.

The side of the Kaʿbah between Rukn Yamāni and Ḥajre Aswad was the responsibility of the Banū Makhzūm and some other clans from the Quraysh.

The back wall of the Kaʿbah was the responsibility of the Banū Jamah and Banū Sahm.

Finally, the Ḥatīm was the responsibility of the Banu ʿAbd ad-Dār, ibn Asad and Banū ʿAdiyy.



When the time came for rebuilding, the Quraysh heard that a trade ship had broken up off the coast of Jeddah. Jeddah is a town on the coast of the Red Sea which is about 50 miles from Makkah.

Walīd ibn Mughirah arrived in Jeddah and took some planks for the roof of the Kaʿbah. There was also a Roman builder who was on the ship called Baqūm. He was also brought back to Makkah to help with the rebuilding of the Kaʿbah.

The Kaʿbah is taken down

The time now came to take down the old building, but no one could sum up the courage to do so. Finally Walīd ibn Mughirah stood up and said, Oh Allāh, we only have the intention of doing

well, and our intention is not to do anything bad. With these words he started to take down the part of the wall which was between Rukn Yamāni and Ḥajare Aswad.

The people of Makkah were worried that something might happen to them if they took down the Kaʿbah so they said, let's wait till night time in case some divine punishment is sent down upon Walīd. If some punishment comes down, then we will restore the Kaʿbah back to how it is, but if not, we will help Walīd to also take it down.

When the morning came, Walīd came to the Ḥaram, safe and sound so the people realised that Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ was happy with this action. They grew in confidence and started to help Walīd.

They carried on digging until they saw the foundations of the Kaʿbah which had been laid by Ibrāhīm عَلَيۡهِٱلسَّلَامُ. A Qurayshi then struck the foundation with his spade. Suddenly there was a loud noise which was heard in the whole of Makkah. The people then stopped digging and started to build the Kaʿbah upon these foundations.

The different clans started collecting stones and built the relative parts of the Kaʿbah as had been delegated.

Ḥajare Aswad

When the time came for them to put the Ḥajare Aswad back in place, there was a severe difference of opinion. Swords were drawn, people started to get ready to fight. This situation continued for 4 or 5 days.

To put an end to the dispute, Abū Ummayah who was the oldest person made a suggestion. He said that tomorrow morning, the first person who enters the door of the Masjid, make him the arbitrator so he can decide what needs to be done.

Everyone accepted this opinion and the following morning they arrived in the Ḥaram to see who was going to be the first person to enter.

It so happened that the first person to come was none other than Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. As soon as they saw him, they all said, this is Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ the trustworthy, we are happy for him to make the decision.



The Decision

Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked for a sheet and placed the Ḥajare Aswad in the middle of it. He then requested that the leaders of each clan should hold the sheet so no one is left out from this honourable act. Everyone was happy with this decision and held the sheet. When the sheet was lifted up to the place where the stone needed to sit, Rasūlullāh ﷺ placed the Ḥajare Aswad in its place with his own blessed hands. And this was how Rasūlullāh ﷺ helped settle an argument as well as place the Ḥajare Aswad in its position.



The Changes to the Kaʿbah

When the Quraysh rebuilt the Kaʿbah, there were a number of changes the Quraysh made to the original building. Firstly, the Kaʿbah used to have 2 doors, so people could go in and out, but now the rear door was closed off and only one door remained.

The second change was that the door was raised to a high position so no one could enter it unless a stair was placed.

Finally, the side of the Kaʿbah which was towards the Ḥatīm was shortened. So if a person reads Ṣalāt in the Ḥatīm, within the semi-circular wall, it is as if you have read Ṣalāt inside the Kaʿbah, Subhānallāh!

Now going back to the times when the Kaʿbah was rebuilt. The 4th time was when ʿAbdullāh ibn Zubayr رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ, rebuilt the Kaʿbah when he was the Khalīfah in Makkah

Finally, the 5th time, it was rebuilt by Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf who was the governor of Makkah in the time of ʿAbdul Mālik ibn Marwān.



Summary

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was born in the year of the Elephant in the month of Rabīʿ Al-Awwal in the city of Makkah in Arabia.

Even before he was born, he was an orphan, his father ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib had passed away in Yathrib.

After a few days as per the Arab custom, he went with Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهَا to spend time with the Banū Saʿad. She nursed him and his presence was a means of multiple blessings upon her family.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ went back to his mother in Makkah and when he was 6 years old, she also passed away in a place called Abwa on the way back from Madīnah.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then spent 2 years under the guardianship of his grandfather ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib until he also passed away. After this, he was entrusted to his uncle Abu Ṭālib.

Abu Ṭālib took his nephew to Shām on a trade journey. There, the monk Baḥīrā' recognised him as being a Prophet.

At the age of 25 Rasūlullāh ﷺ again went to Shām, to sell goods on behalf of Khadījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهَا. He made great profit from the journey and upon his return, Khadījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهَا sent him a marriage

proposal which he agreed to. He married Khaḍījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهَا when he was 25 years old and she was 40.

The Kaʿbah had been in a state of disrepair and during its rebuilding, all of the tribes wanted the honour of placing the Ḥajare Aswad with their own hands. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ found a way a solution through which they all lifted it up together and he placed the Ḥajare Aswad with his own hands.

Sīrah of Muḥammad ﷺ

Part 3 – Life before Prophethood

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